

19 MAR 1949

CONFIDENTIAL

GENERAL

1. British concern over Israeli intentions--UK Foreign Secretary Bevin has expressed to US Ambassador Douglas in London his concern regarding Israeli intentions, particularly the possibility that the next Israeli move might be against Arab positions in north central Palestine. Bevin asked that Secretary Acheson be informed of his view that another Israeli fait accompli might damage UN prestige irreparably and confirm the Arab belief that they can expect no help from the west. On the subject of western aid, Bevin told Douglas that it is becoming more and more "ridiculous" for the UK to refuse arms and ammunition for the Arab Legion when arms continue to flow into Israel on a large scale. He indicated that although the British have given the Legion no war materials as yet, it will be "extremely difficult" for him to continue making flat refusals to King Abdullah's requests. Douglas reports that Bevin informed him tangentially that the Conservative Party plans next week to attack the Government for "jeopardizing the vital UK-Transjordan friendship."

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The Department of State has informed Ambassador Douglas that the British Embassy in Washington has declared "it will no longer be possible to refuse to send arms to the Arab Legion." The Department indicates that great concern was expressed at "the working level" over this possible move and that it was pointed out what an adverse effect this would have on armistice negotiations, emphasizing the likelihood of pressure for the removal of the arms embargo against Israel and the possibility that the Israelis might seize upon this pretext to reopen hostilities.

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